

# IMPERIAL CANCER RESEARCH FUND LABORATORIES

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29th November, 1974.

Dr. Harold E. Varmus,  
Department of Microbiology,  
School of Medicine,  
University of California,  
San Francisco, California 94143,  
U. S. A.

Dear Harold,

I was surprised to hear from Peter after the Florence Conference that you are studying the RPL-12 sarcoma viruses. As you will see from the enclosed copy of my letter to Peter, I do not feel that they are his viruses to give away. I am also surprised that you did not mention your interest in them when we chatted together just after the session in which we both talked, seeing that I discussed the question of new transforming genes in my talk.

I felt bad enough two years ago that you chose to collaborate with Peter rather than me on the exploitation of duck cells as a permissive system for RSV without homologous endogenous genomes. When I proposed the idea at Cold Spring Harbor you were enthusiastic to collaborate, and I subsequently sent you duck tissue for hybridization studies and started replication assays in London. However, when Peter declared his interest at Cocoyoc I had no wish to compete against the man in whose lab I had worked very happily.

This matter with the RPL12 sarcoma viruses is different. It is a project in which I have already put a great deal of work, besides conceiving it. For a proper analysis, you need not only the original RPL-12 leukaemia stock, but non-transforming virus from the sarcoma stocks and, if possible, sarcoma virus cloned free of non-transforming virus. These are things we are actively working on in London, including the size of the genome. The work is preliminary and unpublished. It is premature to give the stocks away to other labs and I think Peter was wrong to do so, though I understand his enthusiasm. I think your techniques are admirably suited to search for new sequences in these viruses, and I therefore welcome your collaboration. But I think it has to be with our lab.

P. T. O.

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I feel very awkward finding myself in competition with Peter over my own projects. But I'm sure you will understand that I cannot give everything away.

With best regards.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Robin Weiss'.

Robin Weiss

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